DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 723 PS 010 024

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TITLE An Introduction to Self Concept. Learning Package 1.
INSTITUTION Bemidji State Univ., Minn. Child Development Training Program.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Child Development (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 77p.; For Learning Packages 2-4, see PS 010 025-27

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. EC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Child Development; *Individual Development; *Instructional Materials; *Learning Modules; Preschool Children; Preschool Teachers; *Self Concept; Self Concept Tests; Self Esteem; *Self Evaluation; Teacher Improvement; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This instructional booklet is part of Learning Package #1 introducing self-concept development used in conjunction with the Child Development Training Program at Bemidji, Minnesota. This booklet is divided into 4 chapters and examines the following areas: (1) basic definitions and concepts of self; (2) how and why self development occurs; (3) awareness of one's own self concept and human potential; and (4) how to strengthen self concept in others via a helping relationship. The appendix provides suggested readings, a bibliography, and a package evaluation form. (The entire Learning Package #1 consists of this instructional booklet containing reading material and 15 written activities; readings from "Building Self Esteem" and "The Transparent Self"; and two audiotapes: "The Person of Tomorrow" by Carl Rogers and "Love in the Classroom" by Leon Boscoglia. A pretest and posttest of one's own self-concept is included for personal use.) (SE)

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AN INTRODUCTION

TO

SELF CONCEPT

The First Learning Package of the Self Concept Component of the Child Development Training Program at Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota

BY

Robert Naegler, EdD

and

Rosalie Anderson

©
By

Robert Naegler, EdD
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Rosalie Anderson
1976

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A NEW WORLD PRAYER

I recognise that I belong to the family. . .
Made up of all human beings
Of every race, color, creed, and ideology
Now living on this Planet Earth.

I understand that there can be no common good
Without an individual good.

I am responsible for myself
And for all human beings
Who share this earth with me.

I know that our enemies
Are those among us
Who will not
Join in sharing the responsibility
For our common good.

I accept my own personal responsibility
To replace darkness with light
To replace hatred with love
To replace suspicion with trust
To replace lies and hypocrisy with honesty

To replace abuse with fairness
To replace frustration with patience
To replace fear with understanding
To replace bias, prejudice, and discrimination with tolerance
To replace ignorance with knowledge
To replace indifference with concern
And to replace apathy with action.

I believe that all . . .
Are entitled to equal opportunities
To live, to grow, and to flourish
As human beings
With dignity and self-respect.

I acknowledge that
It is far better to live and work for peace
Than to die for peace.

As a member of the family . . .
Now living on this Planet Earth
I thus commit myself
and challenge my children
And their children
To do as well.

Lou Torok
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MATERIALS WITH PACKAGE

8.1 Instructional Booklet

8.1.1. Audio-Tapes

8.1.1.1. Carl Rogers, "The Person of Tomorrow"

8.1.1.2. Leon Boscoglia, "Love in the Classroom"

8.1.2. Filmstrips - none

8.1.3. Written Materials

8.1.3.1. L. S. Barksdale, Building Self-Esteem

8.1.3.2. Excerpt from Sidney Jourard, The Transparent Self

8.1.4. Supplies - none

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INTRODUCTION

What we think about ourselves affects everything that we do in our lives: how we relate to others, how we live and act on a day-to-day basis, and what direction our lives take in the future. This whole area of what people think about themselves, or "self concept development," is especially important to those of us who have chosen in some way to let children share themselves with us. Both of us feel that the most important thing that we can do for children is to help them develop positive self concepts: to feel good about themselves and to see themselves as worthwhile human beings.

This is a three credit learning package that consists of the reading material in the package, two audiotapes, and 15 activities. This material will introduce you to self concept development in several ways. First, we have introduced some basic definitions and concepts of self as they are used by various psychologists. We feel that in order to better understand self concept, it is important to have some perspective of how self concept development emerged as an area of interest, why a person's self concept development is thought by many to be so crucial, and how self concept development is viewed and utilized by various disciplines: teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc. Terms such as "self concept" and "self esteem" and principles of self concept development and their importance may seem confusing to you at times. This is because various "experts" approach self concept development from differing points of view and do not always agree among themselves.

Second, we feel that you will be able to promote positive self concept development in yourself and others if you have a basic

understanding of how and why self concept development occurs. The explanations presented, based on a "personal frame of reference" viewpoint will hopefully help to give you more insight as to why people behave the way they do.

Third, and most important, we hope that this package will help to make you aware of your own self concept and human potential. We have developed these materials with the belief that you, as a professional staff member and as an individual, will continue to grow personally as you help children grow. You will most likely find yourself working much more effectively and enjoying your job more when you are continuing to enhance your own self concept. Your attitudes about yourself as a person are reflected every day in your interactions with children. If you find more reasons to feel good about yourself, you can more easily radiate positive ideas and actions that will help others feel good about themselves.

Fourth, this package will provide an introductory overview to self concept development specifically as it applies to the preschool child. The other three learning packages in this component all focus on this area in much greater depth: Learning Package Two explores developmental child psychology and child behavior as they relate to self concept; Learning Package Three examines children's self concepts in relationship to their places as members of a family unit; and Learning Package Four looks at how you as a teacher influence children's self concepts and how preschool activities affect their personal development.

The pre-test and post-test consist of a self concept checklist to help you begin to look at how you view your own self concept. The check-

list is personal and its outcome will in no way affect your package grade.

We realize that in order to get the most out of this learning package, the activities you complete will be of a highly personal nature. At the same time, how you feel about yourself as a person is extremely dependent upon your relationships with others who are significant to you. Thus, we hope that much of what you gain in completing this package will be through healthy discussion with some of those significant people. As you complete each activity and before you continue on to the next one, please share what you've gained and ask for constructive feedback (reactions) with either your field advisor or someone else you trust and can comfortably relate to.

Our hope for you in completing this package is not that you end up with a "perfect" self concept or achieve your maximum potential as person, parent, teacher, etc. Instead, we want you to feel good about who you are as a person now, to be better able to begin to accept yourself and to grow from there, and to do the same with children as you relate to them.

Both of us have grown and further realized our own potential in writing this package, especially through our interactions with Child Development Training Program trainees and staff. Thank you for furthering our self concept development, and we hope that in some way this learning package will further yours.

Rosalie Anderson

Bob Naegler

Operational Questions*

1. What is self concept?
2. What is the "personal frame of reference" and its relationship to self concept?
3. How did self concept theory evolve?
4. How does self concept develop?
5. How do I view my own self concept?
6. How does my self concept relate to who I am as a person?
7. How does my self concept affect how I relate to others?
8. How does my self concept affect how others relate to me?
9. How does my self concept affect how I relate to children?
10. How can I build positive self concepts in myself and others?

*Questions to think about and perhaps refer to while you are working on this package.

Activity 1: Pre-test: Building Self Esteem

Determining how you view your own self concept will help you in relating to the points discussed in this learning package. Before you begin the package, read Building Self Esteem by L.S. Barksdale, the preface and pages 1-5. Then complete the "Test for Self Esteem" on pages 6 and 7 and score your responses as suggested on page 8.

Share below anything you have learned about yourself or any feelings you have about the activity.

I. THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF

The word "self" is one that we use in many different forms, with as many different meanings, and it is also one of the most significant words that we know. Even the young toddlers who shout, "Me do it by myself!" realize that this word is somehow a declaration of their own individuality and potential as human beings. The fact that there are nearly 1,000 combinations of the word "self" (self concept, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-control, self-interest, etc.) helps us to understand just how complex the expression can be.

Basically self refers to the totality of a person's being: the sum of every single thing that is in some way a part of that person. These parts that make up a person's self include characteristics such as race, sex, and mental capacity as well as everything that a person thinks, feels and experiences.

Because parts of the self are subjective and parts are unknown to us, we can never totally know our own self or the self of another person. We can, however, increase our own self-awareness (knowledge of our self) by getting to know our selves better.

Self concept is what a person knows, feels, and believes to be true about the person's self. People's perceptions of their selves, or their self concepts, are based on their past and present experiences and future expectations. Yamamoto, in his book The Child and His Image: Self Concept in the Early Years, helps to distinguish between self and self concept by envisioning self as a vast territory and self concept, a map of that territory. (1972, p. 2)

People's self concepts are based primarily on their interactions with other people, especially those people closest to them at points during their development who most greatly influenced their lives. These people, called significant others, may include such people as parents, siblings, teachers, spouse, children, etc.

Especially when we are children, but throughout our entire lives, the kinds of self concepts we have depend greatly on the feedback we get from our significant others. Cooley (1956) has termed this our "looking glass self," or the fact that we see ourselves the way we think others see us. For example, if we are constantly told by our significant others that we are overweight and unattractive, we perceive ourselves to be overweight and unattractive, no matter how slim and attractive our true selves may be. This principle is unfortunately even more devastating when it comes to self concept development as it relates to race and ethnicity.

Significant others have a tremendous influence in determining whether a person's self concept will be positive or negative. Persons with positive self concepts tend to be secure, confident, enthusiastic, assertive, creative, self-directing, and accepting of others. Persons with negative self concepts tend to be withdrawn or aggressive, apathetic, insecure, conforming, anxious, and discouraged.

Even people with fairly positive self concepts are rarely satisfied with themselves. We all have an ideal self, a person we would like to become, and an actual self, the type of person we really are at the present time. Psychologists such as Maslow and Rogers explain the striving to become our ideal self as a process of self-actualization, or

attempting to achieve our highest possible individual human potential. Both point out that in order to do so, we must first accept our actual selves as they are, and be sure that our ideal selves are realistic. Rogers points out that persons with the greatest gaps between their actual selves and their ideal selves have the most negative self concepts. Once we accept our actual selves, we must work to positively further our own self concepts by maintaining a basic sense of <u>self-esteem</u> and <u>self-respect</u>, emphasizing our strengths as we attempt to lessen the gap.

It is crucial that we help children to develop an ability to accept their actual selves as well as provide the nurturance to further their potential. This is the real meaning or self concept development.

Activity 2

Answer the following questions below to be sure you understand the terms defined in Part I. Discuss your ideas with either your field advisor or someone close to you.

1. How much do you think you know about yourself? Which areas do you know yourself best?

2. List two areas in which you would like to increase your own self awareness:

3. List 3 significant others in your life and describe briefly how they influenced your self concept:

4. What kind of self concept do you feel you have?

5. How would you describe your ideal self?

6. How would you describe your actual self? (You may want to review your Barksdale test to help you answer this)

7. Will you ever achieve self actualization? Why?

The Evolution Of Self Concept Theory

Someone once wrote that psychology lost its soul in order to find its mind; it lost its mind in order to find its self. This is indeed an accurate portrayal of the history of self concept theory.

Since the beginning of humanity, people have spent a great deal of time wondering who they are and why they behave in the ways that they do. There are almost as many theories about how self concept develops as there are psychologists, sociologists, and educators who have studied about it. For many years, it was believed that people's heredity, or traits they inherited, determined their behavior: in other words, people's selves were fully formed at birth, and if people behaved in a certain way, it was because they were born that way.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, a Frenchman, Descartes, made the statement, "I think; therefore, I am." He might have said, "I know I am a person, a living human being, because I know I can think. I can even think about myself." Descartes accented this thinking part of a person's self. Maybe he was unaware of how much what we think about our selves depends on our feelings and emotions; however, he did suggest that if people think about themselves and question their existence, they may also begin to change their ways of looking at themselves, and thus, grow in the process. Descartes was one of the first philosophers to imply that self is fluid and has the potential to change.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many philosophers looked at self from a religious perspective, and "soul" was a word often used in defining a person's existence.

During the early 1900's, emphasis shifted from religion and philosophy to science. There were two main scientific schools of thought beginning to emerge. The first, behaviorism, views behavior as a reaction to something that happens to a person. Behaviorists say that we cannot study people's behaviors based on what

they feel inside, but only on observable outward behaviors. People constantly react to what happens in their environment, or their surroundings, including other people. In other words, people's environments control their behavior and determine the things that people do.

B. F. Skinner and other Behaviorists advocate changing people's behaviors by changing their environment. This has some implications for self concept development, as behavior change can, and often does, improve a person's self concept. However, people who support self concept development argue that Skinner's behavior modification approach does not take into account internal reasons for a person's behavior. For example, if a child wets her bed because she feels anxious about school and is rewarded when she doesn't wet, she may stop wetting and feel good about that, but still feel anxious about school.

At the same time that behaviorism was beginning to develop, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories of the mind, from which self concept development eventually sprung, came to the forefront. His theories were especially significant because they said that people's behaviors are often the results of their unobservable, often unexplainable internal feelings; and that these feelings were the result of impressions and experiences during infancy and early childhood and possibly even before birth.

Freud believed that development is the result of a psychological conflict between a person's instincts and desires and society's expectations. He perhaps had some notion of self concept in mind when he divided the total person into three parts: the id, the ego, and the super ego. He said in effect that we do things without thinking, instinctively, because of our id, and we also develop a super ego, a conscience, to try to stop our id from acting irrationally. To maintain the balance between our urges and desires, and our conscience that says, "Be good," he developed the term "ego." The ego might be said to be the practical self that directs our actions from day to day.

Alfred Adler, a student of Freud, went beyond Freud's thinking that self concept is usually fully formed by the time a person reaches the age of five and stressed the additional effects of people's life styles, culture, and the rest of society on their on-going growth and development. At the same time that psychologists were exploring this new view of self, sociologists William James, George Herbert Mead, and Cooley were looking at self concept development as the direct result of a person's interactions and relationships with others. From Mead came the term "significant other" and from Cooley, "looking glass self."

It was during the 1940's that humanism, or the "personal frame of reference," with self concept development as its base, evolved with the thinking of people such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Combs, and Snygg. Their viewpoints are based on the following concepts:

1. All people are unique, because everyone's past experiences, present perceptions, and future expectations are different.
2. Self concept is not fixed, but fluid. We are the products of our past experiences, but these experiences influence our behavior ever after, and all new experiences create a growing and changing person.
3. Our behavior always depends on our interactions with our environment: our environment includes our surroundings, ourselves, and all other people.
4. Each of us sees the world differently, based on our own unique feelings, experiences and perceptions.
5. People behave according to how things seem to them; thus people's behavior can only be studied from their personal frame of reference.
6. People's behavior makes sense to them as they perceive their world. People, at any given moment, are doing the best that they can.
7. We are constantly searching for personal fulfillment and satisfying relationships with others.

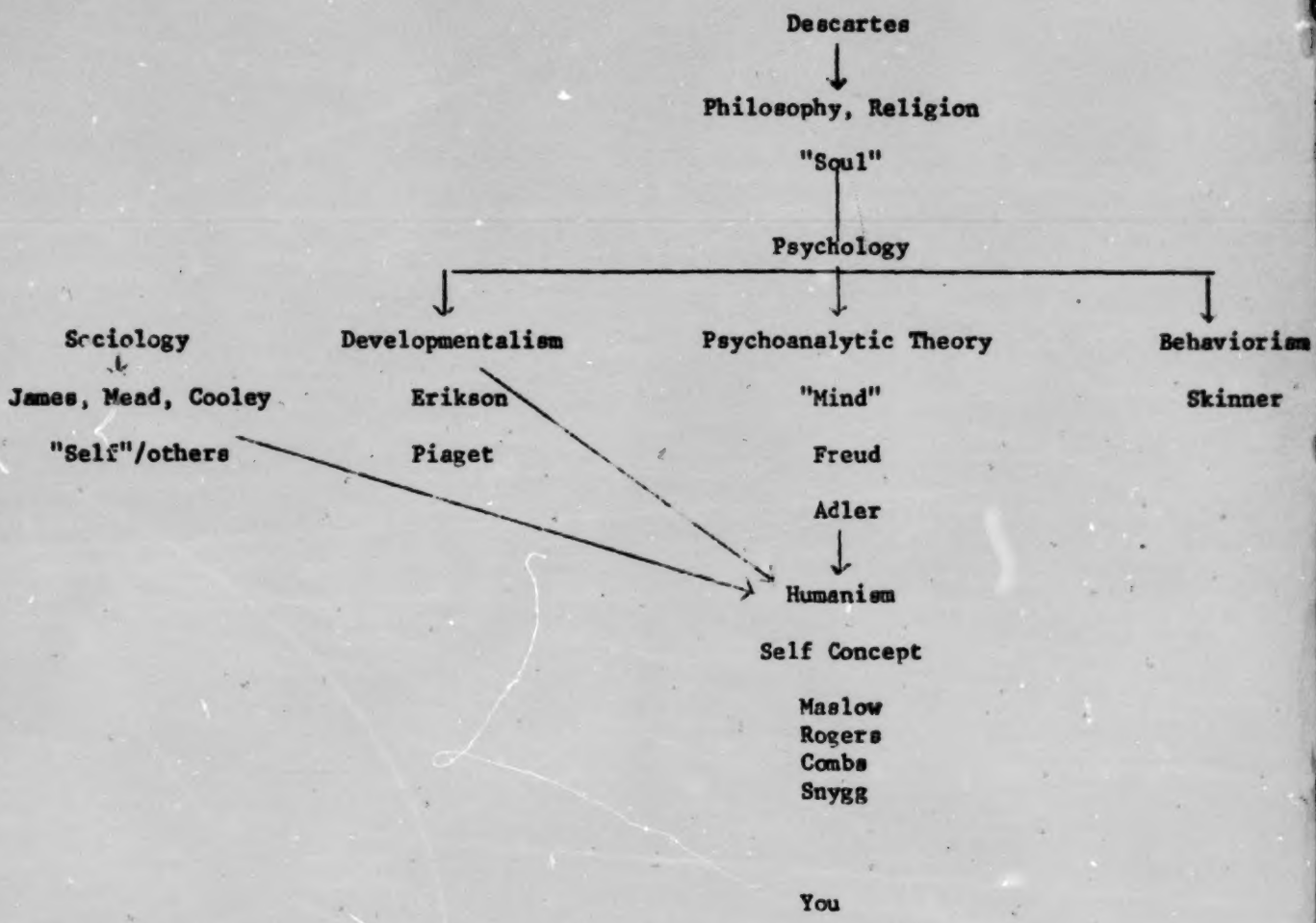
8. Personal fulfillment is a never-ending quest, because each time we reach a milestone, we want to achieve a higher one. Thus, people constantly seek self-actualization but never totally achieve it.
9. We have individual responsibility for our own personal decisions. The choices we make must use our growing knowledge to develop our fullest potential.
10. Only people who understand and appreciate growth and attempt to do so themselves can help others to grow.

Many noted "developmental" psychologists hold concepts basically compatible with those above, among them Piaget and Erik Erikson. Piaget, like George Herbert Mead, emphasizes the significance of children's games in their stages of self concept development and socialization. Erik Erikson's eight stages of man is also from a humanist point of view. This will be discussed further in Part II.

Attempting to trace and study this history of self concept theory is at times confusing, because when many people expand upon similar ideas but have differing approaches, their ideas do not develop in the same sequence or completely fit together with each other. However, in studying an idea like self concept, it is important not only to understand the idea, but also to have some knowledge of how that idea developed and fits into the larger framework of the rest of the world.

As you follow in these footsteps, expanding upon these ideas and testing your own ideas you, too, in your own way, will be furthering the evolution of self concept development.

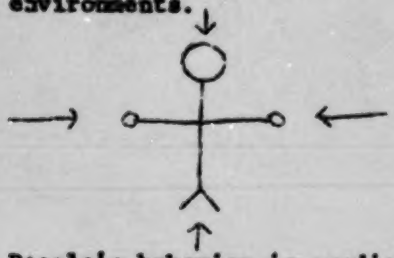
Evolution of Self Concept Theory



Two Schools of Thought Relating To Self

Behaviorism

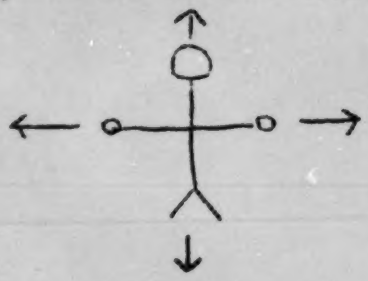
1. Behavior is observable.
2. People are controlled by their environments.



3. People's behavior is predicable on the basis of the principles of behavioral science.
4. One person will behave in a certain situation like any other person.
5. You can look at the behaviors and characteristics of a person independently of each other.
6. You view people as stable realities.
7. Human nature can be explained through outwardly observable human behavior.

Humanism

1. People are the sources of their acts.
2. People control their environments.



3. People's behavior is predicable <u>only</u> through their personal frame of reference.
4. Every person is unique.
5. You can only look at a person as a whole being.
6. You view people based on their potential.
7. Human nature can never be fully understood through observable human behavior.

Activity 3

Josie is always hitting other children and making them cry. What would a behaviorist say and do about Josie hitting others? What would a humanist say and do? What would you do?

II. HOW SELF CONCEPT DEVELOPS

The search for personal fulfillment and positive relationships with other people is never-ending for most of us. This is even more true today than it has been in the past when people were so busy fulfilling their physical needs (food, clothing, and shelter) that they often had little time to consider their psychological needs such as acceptance, achievement, and affection.

Self concept is directly dependent on whether the needs a person has are met satisfactorily. Although everyone has similar basic needs, each of us has our own unique set of individual needs and priorities, as well as specific ways we want to get those needs met. How we feel about ourselves depends not on our specific needs, but on how satisfactorily our needs are being met. People with positive self concepts are people who have their needs well-met as they grow and develop. As their needs change, they are able to find satisfying ways of getting their new needs met as well.

For example, Mary has a strong need for affection. Her specific needs include being touched, as well as receiving a great deal of verbal support. She has three children and a husband, and teaches in a day care center, and her family and the children and staff at the day care center all provide her with the kinds of affection Mary needs. Mary's other high priority needs are also well-met. People like Mary, who have specific personal needs that are met satisfactorily, tend to have positive self concepts.

Mary's situation can be contrasted with Sharon, who grew up feeling unsuccessful at everything she did. She couldn't wait until she got married so she could become a homemaker and cook and keep house. She has a strong need for success, and being a homemaker is her primary role in life from her point of view. Thus, Sharon is devastated when her husband criticizes her cooking and the way

she cleans the house. Her self concept is more negative than Mary's.

Factors that determine what a person's needs will be and thus shape a person's self concept development are present even before birth. Good physical health at birth is important, not only because healthy babies can spend energy growing and beginning to react to their surroundings, but because parents and significant others who interact with babies will tend to see them more positively when they are healthy.

Thus, babies whose mothers have had poor prenatal care and poor nutrition, and babies born prematurely, are possible risks when it comes to self concept development. (The "looking glass self" Cooley describes begins taking shape early.) Note here that this is not to say that all babies born prematurely or to undernourished mothers will develop negative self concepts; it only means that the possibility of this happening is greater than with babies born under opposite conditions.

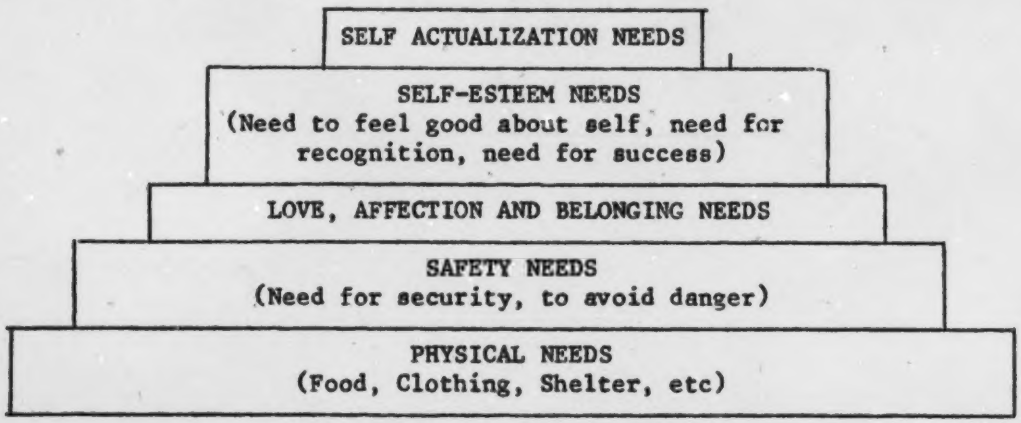
How parents feel about a baby's birth is important, too: whether they want a child, how they feel about the sex of the child, their expectations of the child, etc. all make a difference in the kind of self concept that child will develop. Studies show that bonding, or the ties that develop between a parent and a child when the relationship first begins, is highly significant in self concept development. Studies show that what kind of self concept parents will help a child develop can usually be determined during the first six hours after the delivery of a child, by observing the way the mother holds, touches, talks to, and otherwise responds to the baby. A mother who rejects her child during this time will often remain very negative to the child as time goes on, often even to the point of severely physically abusing it.

The importance of bonding stresses the most significant factor in developing

self concept - the quality of the relationship between the child and the closest significant others, i.e. the child's parents. Promoting positive self concept development means showing much unconditional love and affection (kissing, hugging, touching, smiling, etc.) to people because they are unique human beings. (Positive self concept development is not promoted by showing primarily conditional love and affection. "Conditional" means showing love and affection only at certain times, as when a person is being "good," and totally withdrawing the love and affection when you do not like a person's behavior. Love and affection must always be present. Other factors that promote self concept development include acceptance, respect, and freedom with controls, or letting people know that although you love and accept them, you also have limits as to the behaviors that you will accept. These concepts are further discussed in Package Three, Self Concept and the Family.

Promoting positive self concept development is important from infancy on, as self concept grows and develops in much the same ways that a child grows physically. Many people have studied growth and development cycles, and many implications relating to self concept development can be seen no matter which cycle is studied. Two people who have especially significant approaches are Abraham Maslow and Erik Erikson.

Maslow developed a ladder of needs, beginning with physical needs and ending with self-actualization, the end result of self concept development: totally knowing yourself and achieving your fullest potential. He states that as your basic needs are met, you move up the ladder to the next level:


SELF ACTUALIZATION NEEDS
SELF-ESTEEM NEEDS
(Need to feel good about self, need for recognition, need for success)
LOVE, AFFECTION AND BELONGING NEEDS
SAFETY NEEDS
(Need for security, to avoid danger)
PHYSICAL NEEDS
(Food, Clothing, Shelter, etc)

Maslow summarizes the steps from the point of view of young children beginning to develop their self concepts:

1. Children reach out spontaneously to their environments, including significant others in their lives.
2. If they feel safe and are not afraid, they choose things in their environment to experience.
3. If they enjoy the experience, they repeat it and expand upon it until they become bored.
4. They then go on to more complex experiences.
5. Self concept develops from the feedback they give to themselves as they experience: "I like this; I don't like this; I trust myself at this; I'm competent at this," etc. *

Because the kinds of feedback children give themselves is so dependent on feedback from others, we must be very careful about the kinds of feedback we give them. A child who receives non-supportive feedback continually: "No, that's too dangerous for you; Stop that, you might get hurt; That's too hard for you," receives messages that can lead to being withdrawn, afraid to try anything, and a negative self concept. On the other hand, a child who receives supportive messages continually: "Go ahead and see if you can do it; That's hard, but I think you can do it; Keep on trying - you're doing a good job," receives messages that can lead to feeling successful, attempting to try new experiences, and a positive self concept.

Somewhat earlier than Maslow, Erik Erikson also established a developmental sequence based on stages. At each stage, Erikson saw development as the solving of a central problem and then the moving on to another problem at a higher level. Like Maslow, Erikson believed that moving through all stages is a life-long process.

* "A Formula for Psychological Growth" from Toward A Psychology of Being by Abraham Maslow.

Erikson's stages can be briefly stated:

1.	INFANT	Developing a sense of trust: (i.e., a hungry baby quieting down when its mother appears because it knows that it will be fed); an awareness of others (i.e., smiling at its parent); a feeling of being a separate individual (i.e., beginning to reach, explore body by feeling).
2.	TODDLER	Developing a sense of autonomy: (i.e., wanting to do things by self); exploring; becoming more independent; testing by not cooperating; wanting to make own choices.
3.	PRESCHOOLER	Developing a sense of initiative: observing roles of others: imitating; wanting to share in everything; using imagination; developing conscience.
4.	SCHOOL AGE	Developing a sense of accomplishment: wanting to complete tasks and to succeed; involving self in games and learning rules.
5.	ADOLESCENCE	Developing a sense of identity: trying to figure out how to fit in and future roles in society.
6.	YOUNG ADULT	Developing a sense of intimacy: seeking close friends, love relationships and self-awareness.
7.	MIDDLE ADULT	Developing a parental sense: developing ability to parent; care for children; or assume responsibility for other creative acts.
8.	LATER ADULT	Developing a sense of integrity: developing ability to accept self, life cycle including own death, and to accept significant others.*

In order to develop a positive self concept, a person must move through each stage in Erickson's cycle successfully before moving into the next stage. People who do not successfully complete one of Erikson's stages may have difficulties in making adjustments in later life. A person who does not develop a sense of trust

* "The Eight Stages of Man" from Childhood and Society by Eric Erikson

as a child often has a great deal of trouble in a parent role in later life. Such people may look to their own children to provide them with the love and trust they never received on one hand and not trust them on the other. Much study is now going on regarding what happens when one of these stages is missed. It has been found that it is possible to take people back to Erikson's Stage 1 and slowly repeat the stages of development in a positive manner with a warm and loving significant other to facilitate growth. Through this process, called "reparenting," people can move successfully through the stages. They then have more positive self concepts and are able to parent successfully and develop positive self concepts in their own children.

Activity 4

Think about your needs and self concept development as they relate to Maslow's and Erikson's stages. What are your strongest needs? Are they being met? In what ways? Does this affect your self concept? How?

Can you think of any specific ways your self concept development fits into Erikson's stages? How?

Multi-Dimensions Of Self Concept Development

To understand and further people's self concept development, we must look at each individual as a total person. As stated in Chapter I, although self consists of numerous parts, they can never be totally isolated when defining reasons for why a person's self concept is the way it is. At the same time, self concept is affected by race, culture, sex, and numerous other attributes people have, and self concept development can often be confusing.

One of the authors observed for a period of time a two-and-a-half year old black boy's reactions to a new-born white girl. Every day the little boy carefully observed the little baby girl when she took her bath. Finally one day he asked, "When will she start turning black and growing a penis?" Children have a great deal of self awareness at an early age, and significant others have a tremendous influence over whether that awareness results in positive or negative feelings toward self. This is especially true as children begin to sort out their feelings about self. You have probably observed little girls in your center deciding that they want to be like the boys and stand up when they go to the bathroom, too. The same little white girl as she grew up idolized the older black boy. She not only insisted on going to the bathroom standing up for a while, but when she was two-and-a-half was observed lying in bed twisting her hair and murmuring "Afro, Afro," and "penis, penis."

What's important in understanding self concept development is that while children should not be put down for experiencing themselves as adopting others' characteristics: i.e., boys wanting to be girls and "Mommies"; children wishing they were of another race or culture or looked different than they actually are, they do need feedback from significant others that conveys positive feelings about themselves as they really are.

It could also be said that a person has numerous self concepts depending on a specific situation, and these, too, often conflict with each other. For example, a child may be praised for being independent and aggressive at home, and have a positive self concept in that area. In the neighborhood, the child may be reinforced for being able to pin children twice as big in wrestling: a positive self concept there, too. In school, however, that same child may be labeled as overly-aggressive and uncooperative: a negative self concept. Unfortuantely, the arena for judging self concept is too often only the school and its standards, which are often Caucasian, middle-class, and include definite, somewhat constricting sex roles. Thus, children seen in school as having negative self concepts are often low-income children, minorities, and children who do not fit into typical sex role stereotypes.

Because people's self concepts are shaped so strongly by others, there are four significant areas affecting self concept development that will be discussed briefly. These areas are: language and communication; race and culture; sex roles and awareness; and special needs and handicaps. These areas are not singled out to reinforce any stereotypes, but rather to increase your awareness of their impacts on self concept development.

Self Concept Development: Language and Communication

How self concept develops depends largely on what we learn about ourselves from other people. We learn about ourselves directly, through specific feedback and experiences, and indirectly, through perceptions. People communicate both verbally and non-verbally how they feel about us as people. Non-verbal feedback, such as laughing, crying; or body language such as frowning, smiling; never looking at us directly, shifting uncomfortably as we talk; all help to reinforce our feelings about ourselves and the kind of people we think we are.

Chapter I emphasizes the importance of looking at the world from other people's points of view and realizing that we all have our own unique ways that we see the world. Language is a very important way to determine how people see the world and what their self concepts might be. The kind as well as the quantity of language used can provide a great deal of insight to us in determining this.

People who are always bragging or building themselves up may have negative self concepts and feel that, if they do brag, they may convince themselves as well as others that they count after all. People who have little to say about themselves, and when they do say something, put themselves down, also probably have negative self concepts, as they may feel that because they are insignificant, everything that they might have to say is insignificant, too.

Because communication is so important, people who cannot communicate or do not feel comfortable communicating in the same language as those they are with continually can easily develop negative feelings about themselves. In parts of the United States, Native American and Mexican American children until only recently could not go to public schools until they spoke English. If they learned English and made it to school, they were punished severely if they forgot and spoke their native language instead of English.

It has only been in the last few years that the esteem levels of many Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and other ethnic groups have been positive enough to stress learning and speaking their native languages. Bilingual materials now being used in some schools that make bilingual children (children who speak two languages) feel special because they can communicate with two different groups of people have done a great deal for furthering positive self concepts.

Thus, significant others have a major influence on a person's self concept development. They can not only determine how persons see themselves by observing and listening to their uses of language, but can also shape self concept development through their own language and their acceptance of others' language.

Activity 5

List some specific ways people relate to you, verbally and non-verbally. In what ways does this affect your self concept? Observe how you communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, to others. How do you think you are affecting their self concepts? Can you think of any ways people have revealed feelings about their self concepts to you through language?

Self Concept Development: Race and Culture

While most of us realize that race and culture strongly affect a person's self concept, we probably do not realize how early these feelings begin to develop. A famous study demonstrating racial awareness in preschool children found that three and four year olds already had pretty well-established feelings about race, and these feelings strongly affected not only their own self concepts, but also their feelings toward other children. When shown two dolls, one black and one white, and asked which doll they would rather be like, both black and white children in almost every instance chose the white doll. Even more significantly, most children chose the white doll when asked which doll they were most like. Many children, including the black children, strongly rejected the black doll, calling it "ugly, icky, and dirty."

This has far-reaching implications in self concept development for several reasons. First, because self concept is influenced strongly by significant others, what we reflect to children about race and culture determines to a great extent how they feel about their race and culture. If a white teacher feels superior to other races, this feeling is conveyed to the children with whom the teacher interacts. Two black psychologists add an additional point: black children often feel inferior because their black parents have negative feelings about their skin color, and convey these feelings to their children. Thus, as adults, we must accept and have positive feelings about our own race and culture (but not superior feelings!) in order to develop positive feelings in children.

Another reason why children of minority races and cultures often develop negative self concepts is because of future expectations. We have said that self concept is affected not only by past and present experiences, but also by future expectations. We not only ask "What am I now?", but also "What can I

be?" Children's selves are also made up of "anticipated selves," and children spend much time in developing self trying to project themselves in future roles. The fewer possibilities that the child sees for future roles, the less positive the self concept will be. A study of a Head Start program determined that the most important aspect of a child's success in the program was not the particular amount of time spent teaching or relating, but the number of future images of self that the child had.

The first step that we can take then in developing self concept relating to race and culture is to thoroughly examine our own feelings, become aware of our biases and how we got them, and then begin to deal with them. We often unintentionally convey our feelings about race and culture to others. An adult today still remembers being held by her mother while going on a shopping trip. As a black man passed, the mother quickened her breath and held the little girl tighter. The next time the little girl saw a black person, her mother couldn't understand why she cried and clung to her mother.

It's also important to gain an understanding of your own culture and others': values, language and its importance, traditions, child-rearing and family practices, etc. When we understand and accept races and cultures, whether our own or someone else's, only then can we begin to help others' self concept development in those areas.

Activity 6

You are a teacher in a preschool classroom. A child says to you, "I don't want to sit next to that dirty brown kid." How do you deal with the situation?

What are some specific things you can do to help develop positive self concepts among children from minority races and cultures?

Self Concept Development: Sex Roles and Awareness

Although few differences, other than physical differences, have been found between males and females at the moment of birth, from that time on there are many differences that begin to develop. These differences then are not genetic, traits that exist when a child is born, but rather differences that are caused by the way the child is treated by significant others. Studies have shown that young girls do better academically in school than young boys. However, additional studies show that mothers talk more to infant daughters than to infant sons. Parents and teachers also expect and encourage boys to explore and to be aggressive; at the same time, they encourage and expect girls to play quietly and sit still.

Boys also have more choices than girls as to future roles: in a survey of preschool children, 90% of all girls wanted to be teachers, with the rest of the girls choosing among only two other alternatives, nurses and dancers. The first choice among the boys was firefighters; however, only 10% of all the boys made that choice. The other 90% of the boys chose from among 14 different occupations, ranging from doctor to police officer to astronaut.

Textbooks, children's books, and television programs all reinforce certain attitudes and expectations about male and female roles that affect an individual's self concept. Men and boys are sissies if they cry, like babies, share feelings and show compassion. Women and girls are masculine if they are too aggressive, competitive, and want to be successful. Women are seen in the traditional image of wives, mothers, and homemakers. Girls only portrayed in television and texts more often, but also in more active, realistic, and varied roles. In a study of children's books during the last five years that have won top literary awards, 261 males and 23 females were included as characters.

Of the 96 animal characters, 95 were male and 1 was a female. Females were mothers, homemakers (still wearing aprons), or witches. Males portrayed numerous roles. Males rescued; females were primarily victims who were rescued.

An awareness of sex roles is in no way intended to put down or criticize the traditional roles of either male or female. It is important for people to feel good about their roles, no matter what they are. However, people need to have the freedom to choose their own roles without pressures from significant others and society in general to conform to roles they cannot feel positively about.

At its most basic level, sexual identity goes beyond roles. It says simply, "I am a girl;" or "I am a boy." Roles, however, say "This is how I should behave to show that I am a girl;" or "This is how I should behave to show that I am a boy." Freedom from sex role stereotypes does not mean a total lack of sexual identity. Children still need to develop sexual awareness and positive feelings about themselves in relation to their sexuality from significant others. This means in turn that significant others must feel good about their sexuality and have a strong sense of sexual identity. There are two ways that significant others can help develop sexuality positively. One is by being a positive role model: Showing children that you feel good about yourself as a male/female, yet are not bound by certain traditional roles and stereotypes.

The second area is the extent to which people make themselves available to children. Much of children's attitudes toward their emerging sexuality is formed by significant others' responses to their questions about sex, as well as their own increasing perceptions, although perhaps unconscious, of the significant others' comfort or discomfort with their own sexuality. Children's perceptions are often shaped by significant others' attitudes toward children's sex role experimentation. Many adults worry that children who reverse sex roles will grow up taking on those

roles or that boys who dress up as mothers or girls will become homosexual. Studies show that as long as children do not consistently adopt role behavior of their opposite sex, sex role experimentation is a natural part of self concept development. It becomes uncomfortable and unnatural in the child's mind only when those feelings are conveyed by significant others. Thus, by not labeling housekeeping and playing with dolls "girl activities" and blocks and trucks "boy activities," significant others facilitate the development of positive attitudes toward sexuality and sex roles. In developing self concept, it is important to convey an acceptance of people's rights to be themselves, and to achieve their fullest potential without constraints created by their sex.

Activity 7

Complete the following phrases with whatever occurs to you first:

1. When I see two girls fighting and hitting I respond by _____.
2. I respond to crying boys by _____.
3. I would never consider asking a boy to _____.
4. Three women I admire and why: _____.
5. When I see two boys fighting and hitting I respond by _____.
6. A child who annoys me does _____.
7. When I see a girl hit a boy, I _____.
8. I would never consider asking a girl to _____.
9. From television, a girl learns that she should _____.
10. I respond to crying girls by _____.
11. A boy who annoys me does _____.
12. Three men I admire and why: _____.
13. From television, a boy learns that he should _____.
14. A girl who annoys me does _____.
15. When I see a boy hit a girl, I _____.

What did you learn about how you might affect others' self concepts by completing the phrases? Can you think of a time when your sex has affected your self concept development?

Self Concept Development: Special Needs and Handicaps

A teacher in a classroom had a child who had cerebral palsy and was unable to walk. When the other children asked why the child couldn't walk, the teacher quickly hushed the children and rushed them to other activities. Another teacher in another classroom had a child with a withered hand. When the children asked what was wrong with the child's hand, she calmly and simply explained, adding that they could help the child when help was needed, and pointing out the child's special strengths and suggesting that the children call on her for help in those areas. The next week, a man from the community who had lost the use of his hand in a farm accident visited the classroom, talked about his accident, and matter-of-factly discussed his limitations, but also emphasized the things that he could do well.

Many of the same points that have been stressed when discussing race, culture, and sexual identity can also be made when dealing with self concept development as it relates to persons with special needs and handicaps. People with handicaps accept themselves dependent on how they are accepted by the significant others in their lives. Emphasizing the handicap through teasing, pointedly avoiding, or babying and unrealistically limiting future expectations will tend to result in a negative self concept. However, realistically accepting the handicap, openly and matter-of-factly dealing with it, and emphasizing present strengths and future positive expectations helps a person to realistically accept limitations. This will tend to result in a positive self concept.

Again, it's important to look at ourselves and how we feel about people with special needs and various handicaps. When we're not comfortable about people for various reasons, whatever they are, that uncomfortableness is transmitted to them. Our attitudes are often based on a lack of knowledge. The more knowledge

we have about a person's special needs; what our expectations might be; what specific things we can do to facilitate not only self concept development, but other areas that affect self concept such as physical and cognitive development, the more comfortable we become in accepting the handicap and dealing with it. We often spend so much of our energy feeling sorry for, avoiding, becoming hostile toward, rejecting, or feeling guilty about our inability to cope with people's special needs that we have no energy left to effectively begin to meet those needs.

Activity 8

You have a child in your preschool center who has limited physical coordination and cognitive skills and has just been diagnosed as "retarded" by the mental health center. The parents are having trouble accepting this and they have been extremely negative toward the child, who is acting out in the classroom. What can you do to help the parents become more accepting of the child so that they can further the child's self concept development? Do you think having a child labeled as "retarded" is affecting their self concepts? How would you deal with that?

III. SELF CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT: PERSONAL AWARENESS

Often those of us who relate intensely to others, as preschool teachers do, spend so much time getting to know them that we forget to take time to keep in touch with who we are and how we see ourselves. Before you can positively influence the self concepts of others, you must have positive feelings about you -- your self concept. This means accepting yourself as you are, your strengths and your weaknesses, and believing in yourself and your potential for growth. Only then can you believe in others and their potential for growth, or as Carl Rogers says, "I can't love someone else until I love myself."

Part II emphasized the importance of significant others, especially parents, in self concept development. Eric Berne explains this in terms of tapes that all people have stored away inside their heads. Many are long-forgotten, but all contain stored-up experiences beginning with birth. Critical to self concept are a person's parent tapes: the messages your parents conveyed to you have a great deal to do with what you do and how you view yourself as a person today. How your teachers and friends related to you also affect the way you view yourself at the present time. For example, people with parent tapes that view education as being more important than anything else will probably see themselves positively if they met their parents' expectations, and less positively if they didn't measure up in school at all.

How your family, your friends, your co-workers, and your neighbors see you, all of your day-to-day encounters and experiences, affect your self concept. People today are becoming more used to giving constructive feedback to others, but they find it especially hard to give it to themselves. When they do, they're harder on themselves than others would be. It's easier for most of us to admit our weaknesses than our strengths. The better we get to know ourselves, build on

our strengths and accept our weaknesses, the more positively we can relate to others and help further their self concept development.

Activity 9

We often are unaware of how much our past experiences influence our self concepts. This exercise will hopefully get you in touch with some of your own past experiences and how they affect the way you do things and the way you see yourself today. (Be sure to do the exercises when you can be by yourself in a quiet place and have some time (at least a half hour) to relax and think about the questions.)

Imagine yourself moving back in time. Think about your grandparents. What were they like fifty years ago? What did they do? What kind of hopes and dreams did they have?

Now think about your parents. Imagine yourself as a very young child. Remember what your parents said and thought about you. Does what your parents thought of you as a child have anything to do with the way you feel about yourself as a person now? In what ways?

What did your parents think was an ideal child? Did you measure up to that ideal?

Think of a parent's message you still hear sometimes in your mind. Do you obey it....fight against it....feel confused by it?

How did your parents compliment or criticize you when you were a child? What kind of nonverbal messages did they give to you? A special smile? A stern look? ....What are you feeling now as you think about these things?

How would your parents react if you broke something very special to them? How would they react when you did something seriously forbidden?

What one incident that you think most influenced your self concept development positively when you were a child stands out in your mind? What happened? How did you feel about it? How do you feel about it now?

What one incident that you think most influenced your self concept development negatively when you were a child stands out most in your mind? What happened? How did you feel about it? How do you feel about it now?

How did you feel as a child when you were frustrated? Tired? Disappointed? What did you do? What do you do now when you feel this way?

What did you do as a child to get what you wanted? Turn on the charm? Pout? Throw tantrums? What do you do to get what you want now?

What did you believe about yourself and your worth when you were a child?

Think of a time when one of your parents touched you negatively. Where did they touch you? Why? How did you feel?

When you were a child, were there things that your parents did that you VOWED that you would never do with your own children? What were those things? If you have children now, do you find yourself doing these same things? How do you feel about it?

Think about your parents' values and attitudes. What things were important to them? How did they feel and respond about parenting? Education? Relaxation? Work? Sex?

How have their feelings influenced you and your values and attitudes about these things?

Think of one thing you do now that you copied from one of your parents. Do you even use the same mannerisms and tone of voice? How do you feel about it?

How do you compliment those around you? What do they do? What do you say? How do they react?

How do you criticize those around you? What do they do? What do you say? How do they react?

Recall a time recently when someone made you feel good about yourself as a person. What happened? How did you feel? Did you share these feelings?

Recall a time recently when someone made you feel bad about yourself as a person. What happened? How did you feel? Did you share these feelings?

Recall a time recently when you made someone feel good about themselves. What happened? Did they share their feelings with you? How did you feel?

Recall a time recently when you made someone feel bad about themselves. What happened? Did they share their feelings with you? How did you feel?

What do you believe about yourself and your worth as a person now?

Think of some things that you now do that you feel good about. What are they?

Think of some things that you do now that you would like to change. What are they?

Think of a recent really happy time with the people closest to you. Where were you? What were you doing? How did you feel about it? How are you feeling about yourself and those closest to you right now?

Describe any experiences or feelings you had during the exercise that you would like to share. Who and what experiences in the past have most influenced your self concept development?

Being Yourself

One of the concepts that relates most directly to positive self concept development is the ability to accept yourself as you really are. The central question relating to accepting yourself is "Who am I, really?" Too often we end up playing a number of different roles for the benefit of trying to please others who are important in our lives: parent, spouse, teacher, children, friend, etc. We often end up then trying to measure up to the expectations that we think go along with those roles; in other words, living and doing for others rather than for ourselves. This often causes us to do things out of obligation rather than desire, sometimes creating a great deal of resentment in us. At the same time, even though we may be happy in most of our roles, we get so caught up in being parent, spouse, teacher, etc. that we lose sight of who the real us is underneath all of the roles. Suddenly we realize that we are out of touch with ourselves: we can tell someone what we think about something as a wife, or as a mother, or as a teacher, but yet we never feel we have the time to stop and figure out whether or not that's how we really feel at all. We get so caught up in the many roles that we are unable to grow as unique special persons.

However, once we do stop and attempt to analyze who we are as people, it can become frightening. What if we don't like what we see? If we decide we don't and we try to change and really be ourselves, what if other people don't like the "real" us? And what if the real "us" doesn't want to be involved with other people? Isn't that being selfish? Being your true self is a risk, and the reason many of us fall into playing the roles is because we are too afraid to take that risk.

Carl Rogers, whom we discussed earlier, has written a great deal about this

in his book On Becoming a Person, which every person interested in personal self concept development would benefit from reading.

Rogers suggests that all individuals who are in need, no matter how distressful and turbulent their actions, are really dealing with the questions, "How can I become myself?" He notes that it is easiest to become ones' self in a climate where close relationships are safe and free. Significant others attempt to understand the ways people feel in their own inner worlds. Their innermost thoughts and feelings and their actual beings are accepted completely as they are. In this atmosphere, people gradually are able to drop their false roles and masks which they have previously used to survive and to become more and more their true selves. People undergoing this experience realize how much their lives previously had been guided by what they thought they should be, not by who they were in actuality.

The risky question to deal with is what kind of people will be found beneath the false roles. The important thing that must be realized is that finding one's self is a process: it consists of numerous experiences over time rather than something you can do overnight. It is a growth process during which individuals become more open to their own experiences, and less defensive about who they are. They stop apologizing for their existence and become more aware of their feelings as they relate to others. For a time, this may mean withdrawing into self and not relating as extensively to others. This may be seen as selfish; however, at times, this is necessary for growth (and often survival). People who are growing often go to extremes before they find their individual place and direction. When this happens, rather than look at the behavior as being selfish, two things can be remembered: (1) keep in mind the importance of acceptance and realize that people are always doing the best that they can at any given moment: that their

behavior makes sense to them in their own unique world as they see it; and (2) at the same time, remember that facilitating growth is also important, and that accepting means providing opportunities and atmosphere for growth and not creating an atmosphere where it is more beneficial for people to maintain their extreme behavior. If the trusting and accepting atmosphere is maintained, Rogers states that people will begin to see the world more as it is in reality, rather than from their distorted views. They will also be able to make choices and decisions for themselves based on their own feelings, always asking themselves, "Am I living my life in a way that is satisfying to me?"

One of the most significant things that Rogers points out in regard to being one's self is that, contrary to many peoples' ideas that all people who are themselves are selfish, the very opposite is true. The healthiest people, those with the most positive self concepts, are those who are the most themselves. Once people begin to accept and to be themselves, they are much more able to reach out and to develop relationships with others.

All individuals have strong desires to be themselves, and whether or not these desires are met depends on the type of atmosphere provided by the significant others' in peoples lives. Earl Kelley summarizes Rogers' points by saying I am me...You are you...We can't become each other. We have to cling to our own individuality, as that's the only way that we can be fulfilled. At the same time, we need each other.

Activity 10

Finish reading Barksdale's book, Building Self Esteem. Read through the suggestions Barksdale makes about improving your self concept.

What kind of a self concept do you think you have? List two strengths you feel you have. List two areas you feel you need to grow in. Using any of Barksdale's suggestions or your own ideas, develop a plan to strengthen your own self concept in one of those areas. Outline the plan below. As you continue work on this package, refer back to your plan and keep notes on your progress. Describe what you are doing specifically to strengthen your self concept, your reactions and feelings about it, and the reactions and feelings of others. Ask for feedback as to your progress with someone with whom you feel comfortable.

Self Concept and Tomorrow

Much has already been said about how future goals and expectations affect people's self concepts. This is not only true of children, but also of adults. People that see themselves doing very little in the future and have no purpose for living beyond today often have very negative self concepts. Our society today has emphasized that attitude a great deal, and as a result, many of us live in the future, always saying things like "When I graduate from high school, then I'll..." or "When I get my promotion, then I'll...." Not only do we miss really getting to know ourselves and developing our potential in the present so that we are better able to survive in the future, but we establish a dangerous precedent: what happens when we either reach a point when our image of the future is so inflexible that we can't survive when it arrives and it isn't what we thought it would be; or when we feel that we have no future, but since that's where our self has always been, we are unable to live in our present and enjoy it? You probably know of senior citizens who find themselves faced with this situation.

Alvin Toffler has written several books on the future and our abilities to deal with it. In one of them, Future Shock, he states that the best thing we can help people be able to do is to be able to survive in a future world no one knows anything about. What kind of a person will be able to do this, and how can we facilitate positive self concept development in such a way that will result in such a person?

Carl Rogers summarizes his ideas about the person he feels may have a good chance of survival in our rapidly changing world in a tape, "The Person of Tomorrow." His thoughts are very much in agreement with Toffler's.

Activity 11

Listen to the tape by Carl Rogers, "The Person of Tomorrow." What kind of person does Rogers' feel will best be able to survive in the future? List some of the characteristics of his "person of tomorrow." Do you agree with his ideas? Are you a potential "person of tomorrow?" In what ways? Are your children, if you have them, "persons of tomorrow?" In what ways? Are you comfortable with that? Why or why not? How do you see your self concept in the future? What characteristics would add or change in regard to Carl Rogers' ideas about the "person of tomorrow?"

Knowing Ourselves: Giving And Receiving Feedback

The process of giving and receiving feedback is vital in determining our self concepts. It is through this process of feedback that we see ourselves as others see us, and that we let others know how we see them. Feedback, or verbally and non-verbally communicating information about how another person's behavior is affecting you at the present time, has been analyzed extensively by two psychologists, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. They have developed a process for determining how people give and receive feedback. Their model is called the Johari Window. It can be used to help you determine how you give and receive information about yourself and others. Once this has been determined, it can help you look at specific ways to strengthen self concept by attempting to focus on how you share things about yourself with others.

SELF
Asks for Feedback

OTHERS Give Feedback	Things I know about myself	Things I don't know about myself
Things others know about me	ARENA 1	BLIND SPOT 2
Things others don't know about me	HIDDEN AREA 3	UNKNOWN 4

Looking at the four panes above, the two columns (Panes 1 and 3 and Panes 2 and 4) represent the self, and the two rows (Panes 1 and 2 and Panes 3 and 4) represent others. Column 1 (Panes 1 and 3) represents "Things that I know about myself." Column 2 (Panes 2 and 4) represents "Things that I do not know about myself." Row 1 (Panes 1 and 2) represents "Things that others know about me." Row 2 (Panes 3 and 4) represents "Things that others do not know about me." Depending on how much you know about yourself and how much you share with others, the sizes of your panes will vary.

The first pane, called the Arena, contains both "things that I know about myself and things that others know about me." In other words, it consists of information that I share freely and openly. The pane gets bigger as the level of trust toward others increases.

The second pane, called the Blind Spot, consists of "things that I do not know about myself, but others may know." How sensitive we are to our own behavior and how it affects others determines the size of this pane.

Pane three consists of "things that I know about myself but which others do not know." For some reason, this is information that I do not share. It may be that it isn't shared because of fear of being attacked, ridiculed, or hurt. A

small pane means that you are a person who is willing to take risks in order to find out how others feel about you. This pane is called the Hidden Area.

Pane four, the Unknown, consists of "things that I do not know about myself and that others do not know either. This may be things that are really in our subconscious or things that are on the surface and can really be drawn out through use of feedback. Because it is impossible to ever totally know one's self or have others totally know a person, this box will always be there.

An understanding of the Johari Window concept and determining what our own individual windows look like help us to see which areas we need to focus on in learning more about ourselves and how we relate to others and they relate to us. Because so much of our self concept is based on feedback from significant others, completing the Johari Window is a good addition to the information you have already developed about your self concept.

Once you have developed your Johari Window, you may decide you want to decrease the size of your Blind Spot, that is, to attempt to learn more about yourself from others. You might need to work at being more receptive to feedback and encouraging others to give you more feedback. This could include accepting feedback positively, not becoming angry or defensive when feedback is given, and listening to how others see us. If we are not receptive to feedback from others, it is often because we already have a negative self concept and don't see ourselves as being capable of any change.

You may also decide that you want to decrease the size of your Hidden Area, or begin sharing more about yourself with others. Then the others will know how you feel about things and will not need to interpret your feelings.

The more you reduce the above two areas, the more you increase the size of your Arena, or information shared by yourself and others. This does not mean

that you need to share all information about yourself with everybody. It is important to share information only with those people with whom you feel comfortable giving the information, and with those people who will also feel comfortable receiving the information.

Many people have Johari Windows that show that they receive feedback from others more than they give it. It is difficult to give feedback to others that can be highly personal; yet being able to do so is a significant aspect to the other person in their own self concept development, as well as a sign of a healthy self concept on your part.

Giving and receiving feedback can be strengthened by practice; however, it also involves a belief in humanistic philosophy from which self concept development stems. This basic philosophy is that people must be accepting of themselves and others. As people increase their acceptance of themselves and others, the amount of feedback given and received increases. At the same time, the kind of feedback given changes. People who are more accepting of themselves and others will give more feedback that conveys acceptance and support. On the other hand, people who are not as accepting of themselves and others will give feedback which might be highly judgmental. (Phillip Nelson, 1973 Handbook for Group Facilitators)

Activity 12

This exercise is to help you determine the extent to which you know yourself and allow others to facilitate your self concept development. It is a long activity and has three parts. First, in the statements below you will select the responses that come closest to representing your practices in interpersonal relationships. Second, you will fill in these scores on the Answer and Score Sheet on page 53. Third, you will plot your scores on the Johari Window at the end of the exercise and respond to the questions.

Part One: For each item of the exercise, indicate which of the alternatives you would be most likely to choose in handling the interpersonal situation described. For each item you will have 5 points that you can distribute in any combination. For example, in Question 1, you may decide that you would always do A and never B, and assign A 5 points and B, none. Or you may decide you do A most often and B occasionally and assign A 4 points and B, 1 point. Remember, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

1. If a friend of mine had a "personality conflict" with a mutual acquaintance of ours who it was important for her to get along with I would:

   A. Tell my friend that I felt she was partially responsible for any problems with this other person and try to let her know how the person was being affected by her.

   B. Not get involved because I wouldn't be able to continue to get along with both of them once I had entered in any way.

2. If one of my friends and I had had a heated argument in the past and I realized that he was ill at ease around me, from that time on I would:

   A. Avoid making things worse by discussing his behavior and just let the whole thing drop.

   B. Bring up his behavior and ask him how he felt the argument had affected our relationship.

3. If a friend began to avoid me and act in an aloof and withdrawn manner, I would:

   A. Tell her about her behavior and suggest that she tell me what was on her mind.

   B. Follow her lead and keep our contacts brief and aloof since that seems to be what she wants.

4. If two of my friends and I were talking and one of my friends slipped and brought up a person problem of mine that involved the other friend, of which he was not aware, I would:

   A. Change the subject and signal to my friend to do the same.

   B. Fill my uninformed friend in on what the other friend was talking about and suggest that we go into it later.

5. If a friend of mine were to tell me that, in her opinion, I was doing things that made me less effective than I might be in social situations I would:

   A. Ask her to spell out or describe what she has observed and suggest changes I might make.

   B. Resent her criticism and let her know why I behave the way I do.

6. If one of my friends aspired to an office in our organization for which I felt he were unqualified, and if he had been tentatively assigned to that position by the president of the group, I would:

   A. Not mention my misgivings to either my friend or the president and let them handle it in their own way.

   B. Tell my friend and the president of my misgivings and then leave the final decision up to them.

7. If I felt that one of my friends was being unfair to me and her other friends, but none of them had mentioned anything about it, I would:

   A. Ask several of these people how they perceived the situation to see if they felt she was being unfair.

   B. Not ask the others how they perceived our friend, but wait for them to bring it up with me.

8. If I were preoccupied with some personal matters and a friend told me that I had become irritated with him and others and that I was jumping on him for unimportant things, I would:

   A. Tell him I was preoccupied and would probably be on edge for a while and would prefer not to be bothered.

   B. Listen to his complaints but not try to explain my actions to him.

9. If I had heard some friends discussing an ugly rumor about a friend of mine which I know could hurt her and she asked me what I know about it, if anything, I would:

   A. Say I didn't know anything about it and tell her no one would believe a rumor like that anyway.

   B. Tell her exactly what I had heard, when I had heard it, and from whom I had heard it.

10. If a friend pointed out the fact that I had a personality conflict with another friend with whom it was important for me to get along, I would:

   A. Consider his comments out of line and tell him I didn't want to discuss the matter any further.

   B. Talk about it openly with him to find out how my behavior was being affected by this.

11. If my relationship with a friend has been damaged by repeated arguments on an issue of importance to us both, I would:

    A. Be cautious in my conversations with her so the issue would not come up again to worsen our relationship.

    B. Point to the problems the controversy was causing in our relationship and suggest that we discuss it until we get it resolved.

12. If, in a personal discussion with a friend about his problems and behavior, he suddenly suggested we discuss my problems and behavior as well as his own, I would:

    A. Try to keep the discussion away from me by suggesting that other closer friends often talked to me about such matters.

    B. Welcome the opportunity to hear what he felt about me and encourage his comments.

13. If a friend of mine began to tell me about her hostile feelings about another friend whom she felt was being unkind to others (and I agreed wholeheartedly) I would:

    A. Listen and also express my own feelings to her so she would know where I stood.

    B. Listen, but not express my own negative views and opinions because she might repeat what I said to her in confidence.

14. If I thought an ugly rumor was being spread about me and suspected that one of my friends had quite likely heard it, I would:

    A. Avoid mentioning the issue and leave it to him to tell me about it if he wanted to.

    B. Risk putting him on the spot by asking him directly what he knew about the whole thing.

15. If I had observed a friend in social situations and thought that she was doing a number of things which hurt her relationships, I would:

    A. Risk being seen as a busybody and tell her what I had observed and my reactions to it.

    B. Keep my opinions to myself rather than be seen as interfering in things that are none of my business.

16. If two friends and I were talking and one of them inadvertently mentioned a personal problem which involved me, but of which I know nothing, I would:

    A. Press them for information about the problem and their opinions about it.

    B. Leave it up to my friends to tell me or not tell me, letting them change the subject if they wished.

17. If a friend seemed to be preoccupied and began to jump on me for seemingly unimportant things, and to become irritated with me and others without real cause, I would:

    A. Treat her with kid gloves for a while on the assumption that she was having some temporary personal problems which were none of my business.

    B. Try to talk to her about it and point out to her how her behavior was affecting people.

18. If I had begun to dislike certain habits of a friend to the point that it was interfering with my enjoying his company, I would:

    A. Say nothing to him directly, but let him know my feelings by ignoring him whenever his annoying habits were obvious.

    B. Get my feelings out in the open and clear the air so that we could continue our friendship comfortably and enjoyably.

19. In discussing social behavior with one of my more sensitive friends, I would:

    A. Avoid mentioning her flaws and weaknesses so as not to hurt her feelings.

    B. Focus on her flaws and weaknesses so she could improve her interpersonal skills.

20. If I knew I might be assigned to an important position in our group and my friends' attitudes towards me had become rather negative, I would:

    A. Discuss my shortcomings with my friends so I could see where to improve.

    B. Try to figure out my own shortcomings by myself so I could improve.

The preceding questionnaire developed by Jay Hall From Reaching Out by David Johnson.

Part Two: Answer and Score Sheet

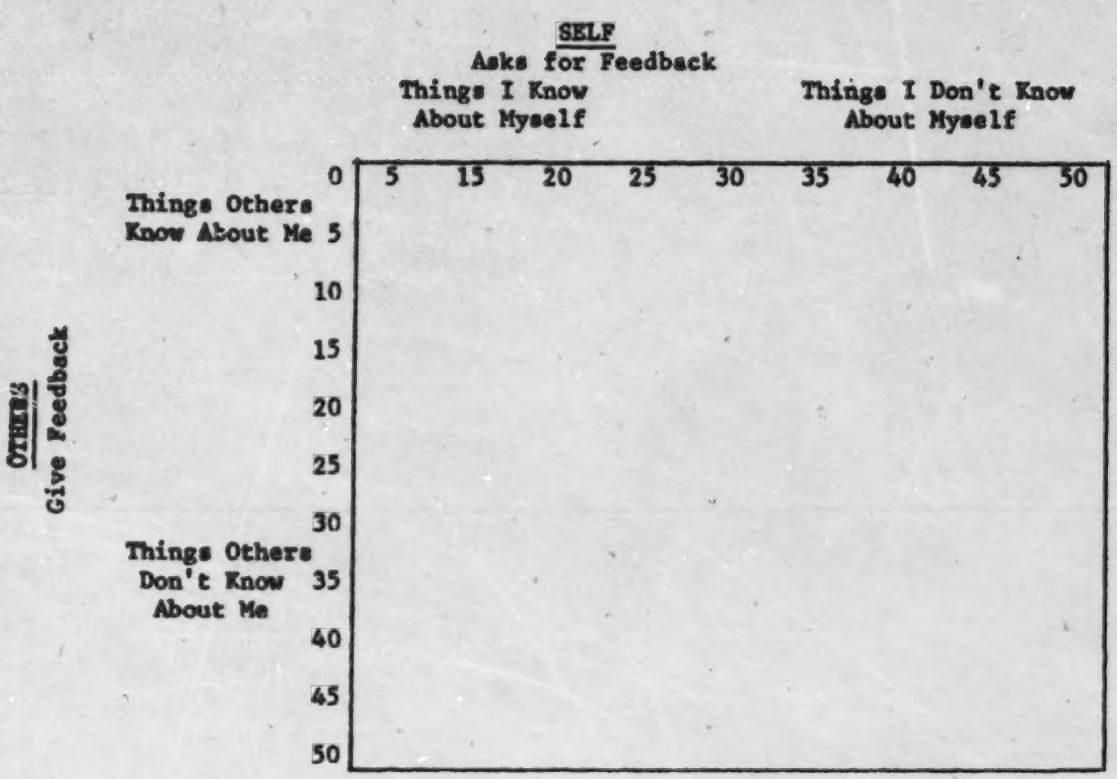
1. Fill in scores from the exercise in the blanks below. For example, in Question 1, if you scored 3 points for A and 2 points for B, put a 3 in the first blank under willingness to self-disclose. You will not need to tally the 2 points you scored for B. Continue until you have filled in all blanks under both columns, then total the scores and enter them under Scores below.

Asks for Feedback		Gives Feedback	
2. B	_____	1. A	_____
3. A	_____	4. B	_____
5. A	_____	6. B	_____
7. A	_____	9. B	_____
8. B	_____	11. B	_____
10. B	_____	13. A	_____
12. B	_____	15. A	_____
14. B	_____	17. B	_____
16. A	_____	18. B	_____
20. A	_____	19. B	_____
TOTAL	_____	TOTAL	_____

Developed by Jay Hall

From Reaching Out by David Johnson

Part Three:



1. Enter your total scores from the previous page as follows:

   Asks for Feedback _____

   Gives Feedback _____

   Interpersonal Risk Taking _____

2. Find your first score (Asks for Feedback) above and put an x on the corresponding number on the top line under Asks for Feedback on the chart above. Draw a straight line to the botton of the square from the x.

3. Find your second score (Gives Feedback) above and put an x on the corresponding number on the side line under Gives Feedback on the chart above. Draw a straight line from the x across the square.

4. This is your Johari Window. You might want to write in the names of each pane to help you remember what they signify.

5. What does your Johari Window tell you about yourself? Do you ask for feedback more often or give feedback more often?

6. What area relating to feedback do you need to work to strengthen? Does this fit with your assessment of your self concept in Activity 10 and what you learned about yourself doing the Barksdale Assessment? If possible, use your knowledge about your self gained from this exercise in working to strengthen the personal area selected in Activity 10.

IV. STRENGTHENING SELF CONCEPT IN OTHERS

The most important aspect of developing self concept in a person is the quality of the relationship that you establish with that person. We said previously that strengthening self concept in ourselves depends upon our ability to give and receive feedback so that we can get to know ourselves, and our strengths and weaknesses better in order to grow. A psychologist named Sidney Jourard in a very moving book The Transparent Self has taken the concept further and discusses not only how feedback enhances our own self concept, but explores how we can utilize feedback to enhance others' self concepts as well.

Jourard explains that in order to have a meaningful and positive relationship with another person, trust must be present. That trust is developed through giving and receiving feedback, primarily feedback about self. In a relationship, the more a person shares personal feelings and discloses about self, the greater the risk in the relationship. We go through feelings such as "Maybe she won't like me if I tell her I'm really worried about having the baby," or "what will he think if I tell him I don't have any confidence in myself?" Lots of times we decide it's easier not to take the risk and involve ourselves in sharing personal feelings. But Jourard asks, what happens when we do share personal feelings, or disclose ourselves to others? His major point is that the more you are willing to share yourself with others, or self-disclose, the more others are willing to share themselves with you, and the deeper the relationship becomes.

Jourard emphasizes the cycle of self-disclosure: know yourself, make yourself known to others, and you'll get to know yourself better in the process as well as help others get to know themselves better.

The key to utilizing self-disclosure is knowing when to self-disclose. To establish and strengthen relationships, being sensitive to sharing personal feel-

ings is important. It is not always appropriate to disclose. Sometimes sharing too much of yourself too soon will threaten others, possibly putting undue pressure on them and making them feel that they, too, must disclose when they aren't ready to do so. Often, too, when people take risks and disclose for the first time, they may be uncomfortable around you for a period of time until they realize that they can trust you and that you accept them and their feelings.

It is also important to realize that while it is beneficial to self concept development to be able to self disclose, this does not mean that you self disclose equally with everyone. Jourard did a survey to determine whether people varied to the extent to which they disclosed themselves to different significant others in their lives. He found that people's feelings and attitudes toward others had a strong affect on the extent of self disclosure. While those persons with positive self concepts tended to be more open and self disclose more with more people, they still trusted people at various levels and disclosed themselves depending on the trust level.

Activity 13

On pages 213-217 in The Transparent Self, Jourard has placed a Self-Disclosure Questionnaire. Jourard developed this questionnaire to help people develop awareness of the extent to which they make themselves known to others: mother, father, male friend, female friend, or spouse. Go through the questionnaire, using the scale on page 216.

What did you learn about your ability to relate to others? Which people do you disclose most to? Least? Why do you think this is so?

Which people in the group you utilized in the checklist do you feel see you the most positively? Which people do you feel most positive toward? Do you think this affects your ability to self-disclose? Work on disclosing more about yourself with one person you utilized in the checklist. Make notes about your progress below. Has this changed your relationship with the person at all? Do you think self-disclosure is an effective means of strengthening another person's self concept?

Creating A Helping Relationship

Positive relationships attempt to strengthen self concept, promote growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, and a greater ability to cope with life situations. We often get overwhelmed when we attempt to develop a relationship with someone who we know needs our support, because we think there's some sort of "magic complex therapy" that's needed. Developing positive self concept isn't easy, and it doesn't happen overnight. It is a life-long process. There are some basic points that anyone who can show love and affection can follow - and thus maintain the key for promoting positive self concept. While it's important to attempt to understand other people and their needs as much as we can, studies show that it's not so much whether or not we understand a person totally as much as the fact that we convey the attitude that we really care and want to understand. Oten it's the special smile, the quick touch, the look that says "Hey, I care about you and I know you're there" that really add to a person's positive feelings about self.

Children especially need this kind of attention to maximize their potential. Leon Boscaglia writes about the magic of love and the importance of the on-going acceptance and affection in developing relationships. In addition, we must keep asking ourselves questions raised throughout this package: Are we recognizing all people as being special and unique? Are we reinforcing people's cultural and racial and sexual identities? Are we reinforcing people's family backgrounds? Are we accepting people as they are, from their point of view and their world as they see it? A vital part of a relationship is a constant assessment of every single part of that relationship and how it affects your own self concept and the other person's self concept.

It is in caring for another person (or persons) and helping another person to

grow that you yourself grow. You need to care for another person in order to be your self. Thus, each person's self concept development is closely entwined in everyone else's self concept development.

Activity 14

Listen to Leon Boscaglia's tape "Love in the Classroom." What are your feelings after hearing the tape? List things you do with others to promote positive self concept. Choose one area in someone close to you where you feel self concept needs strengthening. This might be one of your own children, a child in your classroom, a co-worker, friend, etc. Using the information gained from the tape and the rest of this package, think of some ways you might work at building positive self concept. Keeping in mind Jourard's points on self-disclosure, share your results with someone with whom you feel comfortable.

The Characteristics Of A Helping Relationship

It seems fitting to end this package with a statement from one of the "fathers" of self concept theory, Carl Rogers, concerning the question "How can I create a helping relationship and promote positive self concept development in others?":

Can I be trustworthy, dependable and consistent?

Can I express my feelings so that they are understood?

Can I accept my own feelings?

Can I let myself experience positive feelings toward others - warmth, caring, liking, interest, respect?

Can I be strong enough in my own feelings and self to separate myself from others?

Can I be secure enough about myself to allow someone else to be separate from me?

Can I allow my self to enter fully the world of another without passing judgment or evaluating?

Can I accept people as they are?

Can I be sensitive and non-threatening?

Can I meet people as growing people and not be bound up in my past or theirs?

Carl Rogers, "The Characteristics of a Helping Relationship," in Avila, Combs and Purkey, The Helping Relationship Sourcebook.

Activity 15: Post-Test: Building Self-Esteem

Complete the "Test for Self-Esteem" again in Barksdale's book. Compare your results with your previous score. Describe how your feelings about your own self concept or someone else's self concept have changed since taking this package. Emphasize your knowledge about self concept development and your personal awareness about self in your description.

APPENDIX

Suggested Readings

Anderson, Robert H. and Shane, Harold G. As the Twig is Bent: Readings in Early Childhood Education. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1971.

Avila, Donald; Combs, Arthur; Purkey, William. The Helping Relationship Sourcebook. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972.

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James, Muriel and Jongeward, Dorothy. Born to Win. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971.

Jourard, Sidney. The Transparent Self. Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1964.

Rogers, Carl. On Becoming a Person. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1961.

Yamamoto, Kaoru. The Child and His Image: Self Concept in the Early Years. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1972.

Note: Any of these books would be appropriate background for the package. All are available in the Child Development Training Program Resource Library.

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Washington, Kenneth, "Self Concept Development: An Affective Educational Expereince for Inner-City Teachers," Children Today, Vol. XXIX, No. 5, July, 1974.

Yamamoto, Kaoru, The Child and His Image: Self Concept in the Early Years. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1972.

PACKAGE EVALUATION

1. In what ways has this package helped you to grow?

2. Were the goals of the package meaningful to you?

3. Were the readings outside of the package and the audiotapes helpful?

4. Was the material in the package itself helpful?

5. Were the learning activities helpful?

6. What readings and activities or other resources should be added to this package or changed to make it a better learning experience for you?